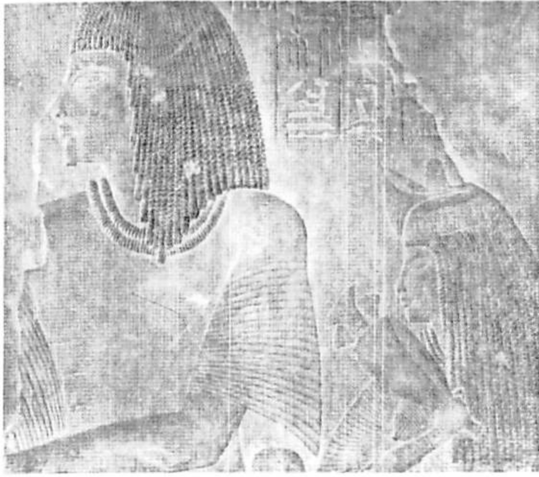


Detail of an Egyptian limestone relief of *Amenmes and His Wife* (about 1300 B.C.); The Louvre, Paris

Ancient Egyptians wore long wigs of spiral curls, such as those worn by this nobleman, *left*, and his wife, *right*. The curls were made of human hair, palm-leaf fibers, or wool.

HAIRDRESSING is the art of cutting, setting, arranging, and otherwise caring for the hair. Women and men style their hair to improve their appearance and for comfort. A different hairstyle can alter a person's appearance more than almost any other physical change. Hairdressing can accent good features and hide bad ones, or draw attention away from undesirable characteristics. It provides attractive, easy-to-manage hairstyles that meet the needs and desires of the people who wear them.

Hair is the most easily changed physical feature of the human body. Since prehistoric times, people have cut, braided, and dyed their hair and changed it in other ways as well. Professional hairdressers first became common during the 1700's. Today, most women and men depend on hairdressers for such services as cutting, coloring, straightening, and permanent waving. Hairdressers are also known as *beauticians*, *beauty operators*, *cosmetologists*, and *hairstylists*. Those hairdressers who work mainly with men's hair are usually called *barbers*.

Vidal Sassoon, the contributor of this article, is one of the world's leading hairdressers. He is Chairman of the Board of Vidal Sassoon, Inc.; author of Sorry I Kept You Waiting, Madam; *and coauthor of* A Year of Beauty and Health.

Hairdressing Through the Ages

People painted and tattooed their bodies during prehistoric times, and they probably also arranged their hair in various ways. Archaeologists have discovered hairpins and hair ornaments from the New Stone Age, which began about 8000 B.C.

Ancient Times. In ancient Egypt, both men and women shaved their heads for cleanliness and relief from the heat. However, they frequently wore long wigs made of braids or spiral curls stitched to a woven foundation. These wig styles lasted for centuries.

In ancient Greece and Rome, most people wore a narrow band called a *fillet* around their heads to hold their hair in place. Fashionable men frizzed their hair and powdered it with gold dust. Women braided, curled, or tied their hair into fancy styles. Many women bleached their hair blond.

Two early Germanic peoples, the Angles and the Saxons, dyed their hair blue, green, or orange. The ancient Gauls, who lived in France, colored theirs red.

The Middle Ages began in the late 400's and lasted until about the 1400's. Hairstyles changed little during this period. Most men wore medium-length hair that reached no lower than their shoulders. Priests and monks had a shaved patch called a *tonsure* on the crown of the head (see TONSURE). Girls and unmarried women wore their hair loose. Married women covered theirs with a veil or a hoodlike covering. Sometimes they plucked or shaved the hair at the hairline to make the forehead seem higher.

The Renaissance. Women wore many hairstyles during the Renaissance, which began in Italy about 1300 and spread throughout Europe during the 1400's and 1500's. Some had long braids that fell to their knees.



Marble sculpture (about 100 B.C.); Museo Civico, Bologna, Italy (Raymond V. Schoder, S.J.)

A Fillet was a band worn by ancient Greeks and Romans to hold their hair in place. This sculpture probably represents the Greek goddess Athena.



Detail of *Lady in Yellow* (about 1465) by Alesso Baldovinetti; National Gallery, London

A Woman of the 1400's plucked or shaved her hair at the hairline to make her forehead seem higher. Blond hair was extremely fashionable.



Detail of a painting (about 1700); Musée des Beaux-Arts, Orleans, France (Lauros-Giraudon)

A Periwig was a huge, curly wig worn by men of the 1600's and 1700's. The wig might be unpowdered, like this one, or covered with white powder.



Detail of *Marie-Thérèse of Savoy* (1700's) attributed to Antoine Callet; Versailles, France

A Towering Hairdo of the mid-1700's was supported by a wire frame. Women decorated such hairstyles with flowers, jewels, or other ornaments.

History